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THE

# S P L E E N.

A N

## E P I S T L E

Inscribed to his particular FRIEND

Mr. C. J.

---

*Orandum est, ut sit mens sana in corpore sano.*

---

By the late Mr. MATTHEW GREEN,  
of the Custom-house, London.

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L O N D O N;

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# P R E F A C E.

THE author of the following poem had the greatest part of his time taken up in business; but was accustom'd at his leisure hours to amuse himself with striking out small sketches of wit or humour for the entertainment of his friends, sometimes in verse, at other times in prose. The greatest part of these alluded to incidents known only within the circle of his acquaintance. The subject of the following poem will be more generally understood. It was at first a very short copy of verses; but at the desire of the person, to whom it is addressed, the author enlarged it to its present state. As it was writ without any design of its passing beyond the hands of his acquaintance, so the author's unexpected death soon after dis-

pointed many of his most intimate friends in their design of prevailing on him to review and prepare it for the sight of the public. It therefore now appears under all the disadvantages, that can attend a posthumous work. But it is presum'd, every imperfection of this kind is abundantly overbalanc'd by the peculiar and unborrow'd cast of thought and expression, which manifests itself throughout, and secures to this performance the first and principal character necessary to recommend a work of genius, that of being an original.

THE

T H E

## S P L E E N.

THIS motly piece to you I send,  
 Who always were a faithful friend,  
 Who, if disputes should happen hence,  
 Can best explain the author's sense,  
 And, anxious for the publick weal,  
 Do, what I sing, so often feel.

THE want of method pray excuse,  
 Allowing for a vapour'd Muse;

Nor, to a narrow path confin'd,  
Hedge in by rules a roving mind.

10

THE child is genuine, you can trace,  
Throughout, the fire's transmitted face.  
Nothing is stol'n: my Muse, tho' mean,  
Draws from the spring, she finds within;  
Nor vainly buys, what Gildon sells,  
Poetic buckets for dry wells.

15

SCHOOL-HELPS I want to climb on high,  
Where all the ancient treasures lie,  
And there unseen commit a theft  
On wealth in Greek exchequers left.

20

Then where? from whom? what can I steal?  
Who only with the moderns deal;  
This were attempting to put on  
Rayment from naked bodies won:  
They safely sing before a thief,  
They cannot give, who want relief;

25

Some

Some few excepted, names well known,  
And justly laurel'd with renown,  
Whose stamp of genius marks their ware,  
And theft detects: of theft beware; 30  
From Moore so lasht, example fit,  
Shun petty larceny in wit.

FIRST know, my friend, I do not mean  
To write a treatise on the spleen ;  
Nor to prescribe, when nerves convulse, 35  
Nor mend th' alarum watch, your pulse :  
If I am right, your question lay,  
What course I take to drive away  
The day-mare spleen, by whose false pleas  
Men prove mere suicides in ease ; 40  
And how I do myself demean  
In stormy world to live serene.

WHEN by it's magick lanthorn spleen  
With frightful figures spread life's scene,

And threatening prospects urg'd my fears, 45  
 A stranger to the luck of heirs ;  
 Reason, some quiet to restore,  
 Shew'd part was substance, shadow more ;  
 With spleen's dead weight tho' heavy grown,  
 In life's rough tide I sunk not down, 50  
 But swam, till fortune threw a rope  
 Buoyant on bladders fill'd with hope.

I ALWAYS choose the plainest food  
 To mend viscidity of blood.  
 Hail ! water-gruel, healing power, 55  
 Of easy access to the poor ;  
 Thy help love's confessors implore,  
 And doctors secretly adore :  
 To thee I fly, by thee dilute,  
 Thro' veins my blood doth quicker shoot ; 60  
 And by swift current throws off clean  
 Prolific particles of spleen.

I NEVER sick by drinking grow,  
 Nor keep myself a cup too low :  
 And seldom Cloe's lodgings haunt,  
 Thrifty of spirits, which I want.

65

HUNTING I reckon very good  
 To brace the nerves, and stir the blood ;  
 But after no field-honours itch  
 Atchiev'd by leaping hedge and ditch.

While spleen lies soft relax'd in bed,  
 Or o'er coal-fires inclines the head,  
 Hygea's sons with hound and horn,  
 And jovial cry awake the morn :  
 These see her from her dusky plight,  
 Smear'd by th' embraces of the night,  
 With roral wash redeem her face,  
 And prove herself of Titan's race,  
 And mounting in loose robes the skies,  
 Sh'd light and fragrance, as she flies.

70

75

80

Then horse and hound fierce joy display,  
 Exulting at the Hark-away,  
 And in pursuit o'er tainted ground  
 From lungs robust field-notes resound.

Then, as St. George the dragon flew, 85  
 Spleen pierc'd, trod down, and dying view,  
 While all the spirits are on wing,  
 And woods, and hills, and valleys ring.

To cure the mind's wrong bias, spleen,  
 Some recommend the bowling-green ; 90  
 Some, hilly walks ; all, exercise ;  
 Fling but a stone, the giant dies ;  
 Laugh and be well ; monkeys have been  
 Extreme good doctors for the spleen ;  
 And kitten, if the humour hit, 95  
 Has harlequin'd away the fit.

SINCE mirth is good on this behalf,  
 At some partic'lars let us laugh.

Witlings,

Witlings, brisk fools curst with half sense,  
 That stimulates their impotence, 100  
 Who buzz in rhyme, and, like blind flies,  
 Err with their wings for want of eyes ;  
 Poor authors worshipping a calf ;  
 Deep tragedies, that make us laugh ;  
 A strict dissenter saying grace ; 105  
 A lecturer preaching for a place ;  
 Folks, things prophetic to dispense,  
 Making the past the future tense ;  
 The popish dubbing of a priest ;  
 Fine epitaphs on knaves deceas'd ; 110  
 Green-apron'd Pythonissa's rage ;  
 Great Æsculapius on his stage ;  
 A miser starving to be rich ;  
 The prior of Newgate's dying speech ;  
 A jointur'd widow's ritual state ; 115  
 Two Jews disputing tête à tête ;  
 New almanacks compos'd by seers ;  
 Experiments on felons ears ;

Disdainful prudes, who ceaseless ply  
 The superb muscle of the eye ;  
 A coquet's April-weather face ;  
 A Queenb'rough mayor behind his mace ;  
 And fops in military shew,  
 Are sovereign for the case in view.

120

IF spleen-fogs rise at close of day,

125

I clear my evening with a play,  
 Or to some concert take my way.

The company, the shine of lights,

The scenes of humour, musick's flights

Adjust, and set the soul to rights.

130

LIFE's moving pictures, well-wrought plays,  
 To other's griefs attention raise :

Here, while the tragick fictions glow,

We borrow joy by pitying woe ;

There, gaily comick scenes delight,

135

And hold true mirrours to our sight.

Virtue

Virtue, in charming dress array'd,  
 Calling the passions to her aid,  
 When moral scenes just action join,  
 Takes shape, and shews her face divine.      140

MUSICK has charms, we all may find,  
 Ingratiate deeply with the mind.  
 When art does sound's high power advance,  
 To musick's pipe the passions dance ;  
 Motions unwill'd it's power have shewn,      145  
 Tarantulated by a tune.  
 Many have held the soul to be  
 Nearly allied to harmony.  
 Her have I known indulging grief,  
 And shunning company's relief,      150  
 Unveil her face, and looking round,  
 Own by neglecting sorrows wound  
 The consanguinity of sound.

{

IN

In rainy days keep double guard,  
 Or spleen will surely be too hard, 155  
 Which, like those fish by sailors met,  
 Flies highest, while its wings are wet.  
 In such dull weather, so unfit  
 To enterprize a work of wit,  
 When clouds one yard of azure sky, 160  
 That's fit for simile, deny ;  
 I dress my face with studious looks,  
 And shorten tedious hours with books.  
 But if dull fogs invade the head,  
 That memory minds not what is read, 165  
 I sit in window dry as ark,  
 And on the drowning world remark ;  
 Or to some coffee-house I stray  
 For news, the manna of a day,  
 And from the hipp'd discourses gather, 170  
 That politicks go by the weather :  
 Then seek good-humour'd tavern chums,  
 And play at cards, but for small sums ;

Or

Or with the merry fellows quaff,

And laugh aloud with them that laugh; . . . . .

175

Or drink a joco-serious cup

With souls, who've took their freedom up,

And let my mind, beguil'd by talk,

In Epicurus' garden walk,

Who thought it heaven to be serene,

180

Pain, hell, and purgatory, spleen.

SOMETIMES I dress, with women fit,

And chat away the gloomy fit,

Quit the stiff garb of serious sense,

And wear a gay impertinence;

185

Nor think, nor speak with any pains,

But lay on fancy's neck the reins.

Talk of unusual swell of waist

In maid of honour loosely lac'd;

And beauty borrowing Spanish red;

190

And loving pair with sep'rate bed;

And

And jewels pawn'd for loss of game,  
 And then redeem'd by loss of fame;  
 Of Kitty (aunt left in the lurch  
 By grave pretence to go to church) 195  
 Perceiv'd in hack with lover fine,  
 Like Will and Mary on the coin.  
 And thus in modish manner we  
 In aid of sugar sweeten tea.

PERMIT, ye fair, your idol form,  
 Which e'en the coldest heart can warm,  
 May with its beauties grace my line,  
 While I bow down before it's shrine,  
 And your throng'd altars with my lays  
 Perfume, and get by giving praise. 205  
 With speech so sweet, so sweet a mien,  
 You excommunicate the spleen,  
 Which fiend-like flies the magick ring,  
 You form with sound, when pleas'd to sing.

Whate'er

Whate'er you say, howe'er you move,  
We look, we listen, and approve.

Your touch, which gives to feeling bliss,  
Our nerves officious throng to kiss ;  
By Celia's pat on their report  
The grave-air'd soul, inclin'd to sport,  
Renounces wisdom's fullen pomp,  
And loves the floral game to romp.

But who can view the pointed rays,  
That from black eyes scintillant blaze ?

Love on his throne of glory seems  
Encompast with Satellite beams.

But when blue eyes more softly bright  
Diffuse benignly humid light,  
We gaze, and see the smiling loves,  
And Cytherea's gentle doves,  
And raptur'd fix in such a face,  
Love's mercy-seat, and throne of grace.  
Shine but on age, you melt its snow,  
Again fires long-extinguish'd glow,

210

215

220

225

And

And, charm'd by witchery of eyes, 230  
 Blood long congealed liquifies,  
 True miracle, and fairly done  
 By heads, which are ador'd while on.

BUT O, what pity 'tis to find  
 Such beauties both of form and mind, 235  
 By modern breeding much debas'd  
 In half the female world at least.  
 Hence I with care such lotteries shun,  
 Where, a prize mist, I'm quite undone,  
 And han't by venturing on a wife 240  
 Yet run the greatest risk in life.

MOTHERS, and guardian aunts, forbear  
 Your impious pains to form the fair,  
 Nor lay out so much cost and art,  
 But to deflower the virgin heart, 245  
 Of ev'ry folly fostering bed  
 By quick'ning heat of custom bred.

Rather

Rather, than by your culture spoil'd,

Desist, and give us nature wild,

Delighted with a hoyden soul,

250

Which truth and innocence controul.

Coquets leave off affected arts,

Gay fowlers at a flock of hearts,

Woodcocks to shun your snares have skill,

You shew so plain you strive to kill.

255

In love the artless catch the game,

And they scarce miss, who never aim.

THE world's great author did create

The sex to fit the nuptial state,

And meant a blessing in a wife

260

To solace the fatigues of life;

And old inspired times display,

How wives could love, and yet obey.

Then truth, and patience of controul,

And houswife arts adorn'd the soul;

265

And

And charms, the gift of nature, shone ;  
 And jealousy, a thing unknown ;  
 Veils were the only masks they wore,  
 Novels (receipts to make a whore)  
 Nor ombre, nor quadrille they knew,  
 Nor Pam's puissance felt at Lu.

Wise men did not, to be thought gay,  
 Then compliment their power away :  
 But lest, by frail desires misled,  
 The girls forbidden paths should tread,  
 Of ignorance rais'd the safe high wall,  
 But we haw-haws, that shew them all ;  
 Thus we at once solicit sense,  
 And charge them not to break the fence.

Now, if untir'd, consider friend,  
 What I avoid to gain my end.

I NEVER am at meeting seen,  
 Meeting, that region of the spleen ;

270

275

280

The

The broken heart, the busy fiend;  
The inward call on spleen depend:

285

LAW, licens'd breaking of the peace,  
To which vacation is disease;  
A gipsey diction scarce known well  
By th' Magi, who law-fortunes tell,  
I shun, nor let it breed within  
Anxiety, and that the spleen :  
Law grown a forest, where perplex  
The mazes, and the brambles vex,  
Where its twelve verd'wers every day  
Are changing still the publick way ;  
Yet if we miss our path and err,  
We grievous penalties incur,  
And wand'wers tire, and tear their skin;  
And then get out, where they went in.

290

295

I NEVER game, and rarely bet,  
Am loth to lend, or run in debt,

300

No compter-writs me agitate,  
 Who moralizing pass the gate,  
 And there mine eyes on spendthrifts turn,  
 Who vainly o'er their bondage mourn.

305

Wisdom, before beneath their care,  
 Pays her upbraiding visits there,  
 And forces folly thro' the grate  
 Her panegyric to repeat.

This view, profusely when inclin'd,

310

Enters a caveat in the mind.

Experience join'd with common sense

To mortals is a providence.

PASSION, as frequently is seen,  
 Subsiding settles into spleen ;  
 Hence, as the plague of happy life,  
 I run away from party-strife.  
 A prince's cause, a church's claim,  
 I've known to raise a mighty flame,

315

And

And priest, as stoker, very free  
To throw in peace and charity.

320

THAT tribe, whose practicals decree  
Small-beer the deadliest heresy ;  
Who, fond of pedigree, derive  
From the most noted whore alive, 325  
Who own wine's old prophetick aid,  
And love the mitre, Bacchus made,  
Forbid the faithful to depend  
On half-pint drinkers for a friend ;  
And in whose gay red-letter'd face 330  
We read good-living more than grace :  
Nor they so pure, and so precise,  
Immac'late as their white of eyes ;  
Who for the spirit hugg the Spleen  
Phylacter'd throughout all their mien ; 335  
Who their ill-tasted home-brew'd prayer  
To the state's mellow forms prefer ;

Who doctrines, as infectious, fear,  
 Which are not steep'd in vinegar ;  
 And samples of heart-chested grace  
 Expose in shew-glass of the face ;  
 Did never me as yet provoke,  
 Either to honour band and cloak,  
 Or deck my hat with leaves of oak.

340

{

I RAIL not with mock-patriot grace  
 At folks, because they are in place,  
 Nor, hir'd to praise with stallion pen  
 Serve the ear-lechery of men ;  
 And to avoid religious jarrs  
 The laws are my expositors,  
 Which in my doubting mind create  
 Conformity to church and state.

345

I go, pursuant to my plan,  
 To Mecca with the caravan,  
 And think it right in common sence  
 Both for diversion and defence.

350

355

REFORMING schemes are none of mine,  
 To mend the world's a vast design,  
 Like theirs, who tug in little boat  
 To pull to them the ship afloat,      360  
 While, to defeat their labour'd end,  
 At once both wind and stream contend :  
 Success herein is seldom seen,  
 And zeal, when baffl'd, turns to spleen.

HAPPY the man, who innocent      365  
 Grieves not at ills, he can't prevent ;  
 His skiff does with the current glide,  
 Not puffing pull'd against the tide ;  
 He, paddling by the scuffling crowd,  
 Sees unconcern'd life's wager row'd,      370  
 And when he can't prevent foul-play,  
 Enjoys the folly of the fray,

By these reflections I repeal  
 Each hasty promise made in zeal.

When g——l-p——s fay,  
 We're bound our great light to display,  
 And Indian darkness drive away ; }  
 Yet none but drunken watchmen fend,  
 And scoundrel link-boys for that end ;  
 When they cry up this holy war,  
 Which ev'ry christian should be for,  
 Yet such as owe the law their ears  
 We find employ'd as engineers :  
 This view my forward zeal so shocks,  
 In vain they hold the money-box ; } 385  
 At such a conduct, which intends  
 By vicious means such virtuous ends,  
 I laugh off spleen, and keep my pence  
 From spoiling Indian innocence.

YET philosophic love of ease  
 I suffer not to prove disease ;  
 But rise up in the virtuous cause  
 Of a free press, and equal laws.

375

380

385

390

The

The press restrain'd ! nefandous thought !

In vain our sires have nobly fought.

395

While free from force the press remains,

Virtue and freedom clear our plains,

And learning largeffes bestows,

And keeps uncensur'd open house ;

We to the nation's public mart

400

Our works of wit, and schemes of art,

And philosophic goods this way,

Like water-carriage cheap convey.

This tree, which knowledge so affords,

Inquisitors with flaming swords

405

From lay-approach with zeal defend,

Lest their own paradise should end.

The press from her fecundous womb

Brought forth the arts of Greece and Rome ;

Her offspring, skill'd in logick war,

410

Truth's banner wav'd in open air ;

The monster Superstition fled,

And hid in shades its Gorgon head ;

And lawless power the long-kept field,  
By reason quell'd, was forc'd to yield.

415

This nurse of arts, and freedom's fence  
To chain, is treason against sense :

And, Liberty, thy thousand tongues  
None silence, who design no wrongs ;  
For those, that use the gag's restraint,  
First rob, before they stop complaint.

420

SINCE disappointment galls within,  
And subjugates the foul to spleen ;  
Most schemes as money-snares I hate,  
And bite not at projectors bait.

425

Sufficient wrecks appear each day,  
And yet fresh fools are cast away.

E'er well the bubbl'd can turn round,  
Their painted vessel runs a-ground ;  
Or in deep seas it oversets

430

By a fierce hurricane of debts ;  
Or helm-directors in one trip,  
Freight first embezzel'd, sink the ship.

Such

Such was of late a corporation,  
 The brazen serpent of the nation, 435  
 Which, when hard accidents distress'd,  
 The poor must look at to be blest,  
 And thence expect with paper seal'd  
 By fraud and us'ry to be heal'd.

I IN no soul-consumption wait 440  
 Whole years at levees of the great,  
 And hungry hopes regale the while  
 On the spare diet of a smile.  
 There you may see the idol stand  
 With mirrour in his wanton hand ; 445  
 Above, below, now here, now there  
 He throws about the sunny glare ;  
 Crowds pant, and press to seize the prize,  
 The gay delusion of their eyes.

WHEN fancy tries her limning skill 450  
 To draw and colour at her will,  
 And

And raise and round the figures well,  
 And shew her talent to excel,  
 I guard my heart, lest it should woo  
 Unreal beauties, fancy drew,  
 And disappointed feel despair  
 At loss of things, that never were.

455

WHEN I lean politicians mark  
 Grazing on æther in the park,  
 Who e'er on wing with open throats  
 Fly at debates, expresses, votes,  
 Just in the manner swallows use,  
 Catching their airy food of news,  
 Whose latrant stomachs oft molest  
 The deep-laid plans, their dreams suggest ;  
 Or see some poet pensive fit,  
 Fondly mistaking spleen for wit,  
 Who, tho' short-winded, still will aim  
 To found the epic trump of fame,

460

465

Who

Who still on Phœbus' smiles will doat, 470

Nor learn conviction from his coat ;

I bleſs my stars, I never knew

Whimseys, which close purſu'd, undo,

And have from old experience been

Both parent, and the child of ſpleen. 475

These ſubjects of Apollo's ſtate,

(Who from false fire derive their fate,

With airy purſhes undone

Of lands, which none lend mony on,)

Born dull, had follow'd thriving ways, 480

Nor lost one hour to gather bays.

Their fancyſ first delirious grew,

And ſcenes ideal took for true.

Fine to the fight Parnaffus lies,

And with false proſpeſts cheats their eyes; 485

The fabl'd goods, the poets ſing,

A ſeafon of perpetual ſpring,

Brooks, flow'ry fields, and groves of trees

Affording ſweets, and ſimiles,

Gay dreams inspir'd in myrtle bow'rs,

490

And wreaths of undecaying flow'rs,

Apollo's harp with airs divine,

The sacred musick of the nine,

Views of the temple rais'd to fame,

And for a vacant nitch proud aim

495

Ravish their souls, and plainly shew,

What fancy's sketching pow'r can do;

They will attempt the mountain steep,

Where on the top, like dreams in sleep,

The muses revelations shew,

500

That find men crackt, or make them so.

You friend, like me, the trade of rhyme

Avoid, elab'rate waste of time,

Nor are content to be undone,

And pass for Phœbus' crazy son.

505

Poems, the hop-grounds of the brain,

Afford the most uncertain gain;

And

And lott'ries never tempt the wife,  
With blanks so many to a prize.

I only transient visits pay, 510

Meeting the Muses in my way,  
Scarce known to the fastidious dames,

Nor skill'd to call them by their names;

Nor can their passports in these days

Your profit warrant, or your praise: 515

On poems by their dictates writ

Criticks, as sworn appraisers fit,

And, mere upholsterers, in a trice

On gems and paintings set a price;

These Tayl'ring artists for our lays 520

Invent cramp'd rules, and with strait stays

Striving free nature's shape to hit,

Emaciate sense, before they fit.

A common place, and many friends  
Can serve the plagiary's ends,

525  
Whose

Whose easy vamping talent lies,  
 First wit to pilfer, then disguise.  
 Thus some devoid of art and skill  
 To search the mine on Pindus' hill,

Proud to aspire and workmen grow, 530

By genius doom'd to stay below,  
 As their own digging, shew the town  
 Wit's treasure brought by others down.

Some wanting, if they find a mine,  
 An artist's judgment to refine,

535  
 On fame precipitately fixt,  
 The ore with baser metals mixt  
 Melt down, impatient of delay,  
 And call the vicious mass a play.

All these engage to serve their ends

540  
 A band select of trusty friends,  
 Who, lesson'd right, extol the thing,  
 As Psaphon taught his birds to sing.

Then to the ladies they submit,  
 Returning officers on wit;

545

A

A crowded house their presence draws,  
 And on the beaus imposes laws ;  
 And judgment in its favour ends,  
 When all the pannel are its friends :  
 Their natures merciful and mild  
 Have from mere pity fav'd the child ;  
 In bulrush ark the bantling found,  
 Helpless, and ready to be drown'd,  
 They have preserv'd by kind support,  
 And brought the baby-muse to court.

550

555

BUT there's a youth, that you can name,  
 Who needs no leading-strings to fame,  
 Whose quick maturity of brain  
 The birth of Pallas may explain ;  
 Dreaming of whose depending fate,  
 I heard Melpomene debate,  
 This, this is he, that was foretold,  
 Should emulate our Greeks of old,

560

Inspir'd

Inspir'd by me with sacred art,  
 He sings, and rules the varied heart : 565  
 If Jove's dread anger he rehearse,  
 We hear the thunder in his verse ;  
 If he describe love turn'd to rage,  
 The furies riot on his page ;  
 If he fair liberty and law 570  
 By ruffian power expiring draw,  
 The keener passions then engage  
 Aright, and sanctify their rage ;  
 If he attempt disastrous love,  
 We hear those plaints, that wound the grove ; 575  
 Within the kinder passions glow,  
 And tears distill'd from pity flow.

FROM the bright vision I descend,  
 And my deserted theme attend.

ME never did ambition seize, 580  
 Strange fever most inflam'd by ease,

The

The active lunacy of pride,  
 That courts jilt fortune for a bride.  
 This par'dise-tree, so fair and high,  
 I view with no aspiring eye : 585

Like aspines shake the restless leaves,  
 And Sodom-fruit our pains deceives ;  
 Whence frequent falls give no surprize,  
 But fits of spleen call'd growing wife.  
 Greatness in glitt'ring forms display'd, 590  
 Affects weak eyes much us'd to shade,  
 And by its falsly envy'd scene  
 Gives self-debausing fits of spleen.  
 We should 'be pleas'd that things are so,  
 Who do for nothing see the show, 595  
 And, in middle-siz'd, can pass between  
 Life's hubbub safe, because unseen,  
 And I'midst the glare of greatness trace  
 A watry sun-shine in the face,  
 And pleasures fled to, to redress 600  
 The sad fatigue of idleness.

CONTENTMENT, parent of delight,  
 So much a stranger to our sight,  
 Say, goddefs, in what happy place  
 Mortals behold thy blooming face ;

605

Thy gracious auspices impart,  
 And for thy temple chuse my heart.  
 They, whom thou deignest to inspire,  
 Thy science learn, to bound desire ;

610

By happy alchymy of mind  
 They turn to pleasure all they find ;  
 They both disdain in outward mien  
 The grave and solemn garb of spleen,

And meretricious arts of dress

To feign a joy, and hide distrefs ;

615

Unmov'd when the rude tempest blows,

Without an opiate they repose ;

And cover'd by your shield defy

The whizzing shafts, that round them fly ;

Nor, meddling with the Gods' affairs,

620

Concern themselves with distant cares ;

But

But place their bliss in mental rest,  
And feast upon the good possest.

FORC'D by soft violence of pray'r  
The blythsome goddess sooths my care ; 625  
I feel the deity inspire,  
And thus she models my desire.  
Two hundred pounds half-yearly paid,  
Annuity securely made ;  
A farm some twenty miles from town, 630  
Small, tight, salubrious, and my own ;  
Two maids, that never saw the town ;  
A serving-man not quite a clown ;  
A boy to help to tread the mow ;  
And drive, while t'other holds the plough ; 635  
A chief of temper form'd to please,  
Fit to converse, and keep the keys,  
And better to preserve the peace,  
Commission'd by the name of niece ;

With understandings of a size

640

To think their master very wise.

May heaven (it's all I wish for) send

One genial room to treat a friend,

Where decent cup-board, little plate

Displays benevolence, not state.

645

And may my humble dwelling stand

Upon some chosen spot of land ;

A pond before full to the brim,

Where cows may cool, and geese may swim ;

Behind a green, like velvet neat,

650

Soft to the eye, and to the feet,

Where od'rous plants in evening fair

Breathe all around ambrosial air,

From Eurus, foe to kitchen-ground,

Fenc'd by a slope with bushes crown'd,

655

Fit dwelling for the feather'd throng,

Who pay their quit-rents with a song ;

With op'ning view of hills and dales,

Which sense and fancy too regales,

Where

Where the half-cirque, which vision bounds, 660  
 Like amphitheatre surrounds ;  
 And woods impervious to the breeze,  
 Thick phalanx of embodied trees,  
 From hills thro' plains in dusk array  
 Extended far repel the day. 665

Here stillness, height, and solemn shade  
 Invite, and contemplation aid :  
 Here nymphs from hollow oaks relate  
 The dark decrees and will of fate,

And dreams beneath the spreading beach 670  
 Inspire, and docile fancy teach ;  
 While soft as breezy breath of wind,  
 Impulses rustle thro' the mind :

Here Dryads, scorning Phœbus ray,  
 While Pan melodious pipes away, 675  
 In measur'd motions frisk about,  
 'Till old Silenus puts them out :

There see the clover, pea, and bean,  
 Vie in variety of green ;

Fresh pastures speckl'd o'er with sheep ;  
 Brown fields their fallow sabbaths keep ;  
 Plump Ceres golden tresses wear,  
 And poppy-topknots deck her hair ;  
 And silver streams thro' meadows stray,  
 And Naiads on the margin play ;  
 And lesser nymphs on side of hills  
 From play-thing urns pour down the rills.

680

685

690

695

Thus shelter'd free from care and strife,  
 May I enjoy a calm thro' life ;  
 See faction, safe in low degree,  
 As men at land see storms at sea ;  
 And laugh at miserable elves  
 Not kind, so much as to themselves,  
 Curst with such souls of base alloy,  
 As can possess, but not enjoy,  
 Debarr'd the pleasure to impart  
 By av'rice, sphincter of the heart,

Who

Who wealth, hard earn'd by guilty cares,  
Bequeath untouched to thankless heirs.

May I, with look ungloom'd by guile,

700

And wearing virtue's livery-smile ;

Prone the distressed to relieve,

And little trespasses forgive ;

With income not in fortune's pow'r,

And skill to make a busy hour ;

705

With trips to town, life to amuse,

To purchase books, and hear the news,

To see old friends, brush off the clown,

And quicken taste at coming down ;

Unhurt by sickness' blasting rage,

710

And slowly mellowing in age,

When fate extends its gath'ring gripe,

Fall off like fruit grown fully ripe,

Quit a worn being without pain,

Perhaps to blossom soon again.

715

BUT now more serious see me grow,  
And what I think, my Memmius, know.

TH' enthusiast's hopes, and raptures wild,  
Have never yet my reason foil'd.

His springy soul dilates like air,

When free from weight of ambient care ;

And, hush'd in meditations deep,

Slides into dreams, as when asleep ;

Then, fond of new discov'ries grown,

Proves a Columbus of her own,

Disdains the narrow bounds of place,

And thro' the wilds of endless space,

Born up on metaphysic wings,

Chases light forms, and shadowy things;

And in the vague excursion caught,

Brings home some rare exotic thought :

The melancholy man such dreams,

As brightest evidence esteems ;

720

725

730

Fain

Fain would he see some distant scene  
 Suggested by his restless spleen,  
 And fancy's telescope applies  
 With tinctur'd glass to cheat his eyes.

735

Such thoughts, as love the gloom of night,  
 I close examine by the light.  
 For who, tho' brib'd by gain to lye,  
 Dare sun-beam written truths deny,  
 And execute plain common sense.  
 On faith's mere hearsay evidence ?

740

THAT superstition mayn't create,  
 And club its ills with those of fate,  
 I many a notion take to task,  
 Made dreadful by its visor-mask :  
 Thus scruple, spasm of the mind,  
 Is cur'd, and certainty I find ;  
 Since optic reason shews me plain  
 I dreaded spectres of the brain ;

745

750

And

And legendary fears are gone,  
 Tho' in tenacious childhood sown.  
 Thus in opinions I commence  
 Freeholder in the proper sense, 755  
 And neither suit nor service do,  
 Nor homage to pretenders shew,  
 Who boast themselves by spurious roll  
 Lords of the manor of the soul ;  
 Preferring sense, from chin that's bare, 760  
 To nonsense thron'd in whisker'd hair.

To thee, creator uncreate,  
 O Entium Ens divinely great ! —  
 Hold, Muse, nor melting pinions try ;  
 Nor near the blazing glory fly ; 765  
 Nor straining break thy feeble bow,  
 Unfeather'd arrows far to throw ;  
 Thro' fields unknown nor madly stray,  
 Where no ideas mark the way ;

With

With tender eyes, and colours faint, 770  
 And trembling hands forbear to paint.  
 Who features veil'd by light can hit?  
 Where can, what has no outline, fit?  
 My soul, the vain attempt forgo,  
 Thyself, the fitter subject, know. 775  
 He wisely shuns the bold extreme,  
 Who soon lays by th' unequal theme,  
 Nor runs, with wisdom's Sirens caught,  
 On quick-sands swallowing shipwreckt thought;  
 But, conscious of his distance, gives 780  
 Mute praise, and humble negatives.  
 In one, no object of our sight,  
 Immutable and infinite,  
 Who can't be cruel, or unjust,  
 Calm and resign'd, I fix my trust; 785  
 To him my past and present state  
 I owe, and must my future fate.  
 A stranger into life I'm come,  
 Dying may be our going home,

Transported

Transported here by angry fate,  
 The convicts of a prior state :  
 Hence I no anxious thoughts bestow  
 On matters, I can never know.

794

Thro' life's foul ways, like vagrant, pass'd,  
 He'll grant a settlement at last ;  
 And with sweet ease the wearied crown,  
 By leave to lay his being down.

795

If doom'd to dance th' eternal round  
 Of life, no sooner lost than found ;  
 And dissolution soon to come,  
 Like sponge, wipes out life's present sum,  
 But can't our state of pow'r bereave  
 An endless series to receive :

800

Then if hard dealt with here by fate,  
 We ballance in another state,  
 And consciousness must go along,  
 And sign th' acquittance for the wrong ;  
 He for his creatures must decree  
 More happiness than misery,

805

Or

Or be supposed to create,  
810  
 Curious to try, what 'tis to hate,  
 And do an act, which rage infers,  
 'Cause lameness halts, or blindness errs.

Thus, thus I steer my bark, and sail

On even keel with gentle gale.

815

At helm I make my reason sit,

My crew of passions all submit.

If dark and blustering prove some nights

Philosophy puts forth her lights ;

Experience holds the cautious glass,

820

To shun the breakers, as I pass ;

And frequent throws the wary lead,

To see what dangers may be hid.

And once in seven years I'm seen

At Bath, or Tunbridge to careen.

825

Tho' pleas'd to see the dolphins play,

I mind my compass and my way ;

With

With store sufficient for relief,  
 And wisely still prepar'd to reef;  
 Nor wanting the dispersive bowl  
 Of cloudy weather in the soul,  
 That heaven propitious send

834

(and v. other to the end)

Not over-blown,

In world unknown.

835

F. W. T. S.